

Ninnekah Public Schools

Accreditation Review

Oklahoma State Board of Education
September 30, 2021

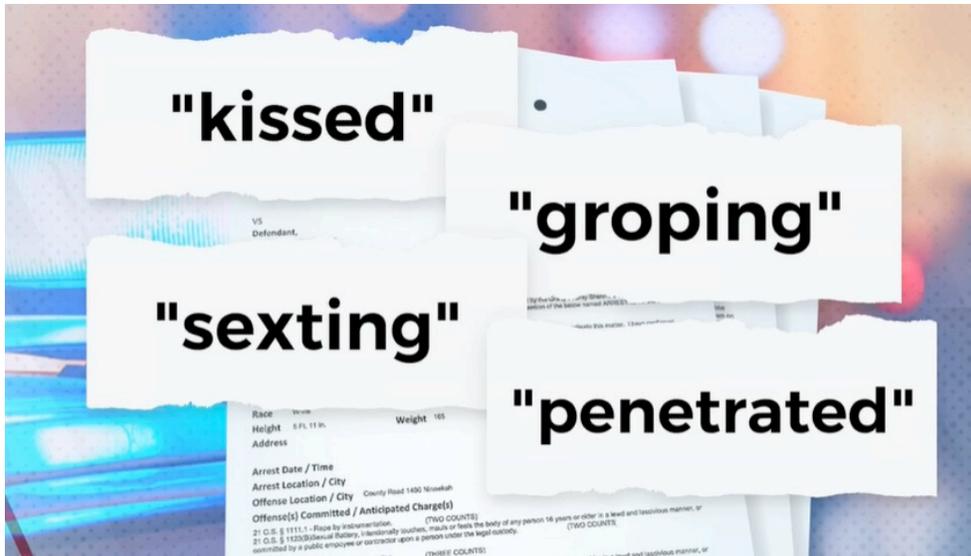


OKLAHOMA
Education



June 2021 Arrest of Ronald Akins

- Ninnekah Public Schools girls basketball coach and PE teacher Ron Akins was arrested on June 26, 2021, and charged with Sexual Battery and Rape by Instrumentation.
- Akins reportedly inflicted such assaults on Ninnekah students.



Ninnekah Coach Charged With Rape After Multiple Allegations From Former Students

Friday, July 2nd 2021, 10:18 pm
By: Barry Mangold



Concerns About School District Inaction

Following the Akins arrest, former Ninnekah students publicly raised concerns at school board meetings and in media statements about the school district's apparent failure to respond appropriately to student allegations and longstanding "rumors."

Ninnekah community, former players speak to school board

Austin Litterell Jul 19, 2021

"We should have been taken seriously," she said.
"Appropriate actions should have been taken, and they weren't."



Former team member speaks out after Ninnekah coach arrested for sexual assault allegations



2nd Ninnekah Victim Speaks Out About Girls' Basketball Team's Culture Regarding Sexual Misconduct

Title IX

- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, or “**Title IX**”, is a federal law that applies to public schools.
- **Title IX protects students from discrimination or harassment based on sex**, by ensuring an education institution must respond swiftly and appropriately if a student raises a complaint or concern of that nature. See 20 U.S.C. § 1681.
- While Title IX is ultimately enforced at the federal level, the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) helps ensure that Oklahoma school districts comply with applicable federal laws through the state accreditation of public schools. See 70 O.S. § 3-104.4.

Title IX the 'Strongest Tool' in Protecting Educational Opportunities Free from Sex Discrimination



School District Obligations under Title IX

Key Responsibilities for Elementary and Secondary Schools:

- Designate a **Title IX coordinator** and ensure appropriate training.
- Have **clear, easily available policies** on Title IX and how a student (or staff member) can make complaints or raise concerns about sex discrimination or harassment.
- An elementary or secondary school **must respond swiftly and appropriately** when any of its employees know that **sexual harassment may have occurred**.
- **Supportive Measures** must be offered to students who may have been affected by sexual harassment or discrimination.



OSDE Title IX Team Met With Supt. Todd Bunch

- On July 29, 2021, OSDE staff visited Ninnekah to discuss Title IX issues and concerns with now-suspended superintendent Todd Bunch.
- Concerns that the District had failed to adequately implement Title IX protections for students were confirmed and reinforced by the conversation with Bunch.
- Issues identified included:
 - **Title IX policies and procedures** were historically absent or unclear.
 - Title IX designees had **little or no knowledge of Title IX** protections.
 - The District was **notified in 2015 of alleged misconduct by Akins**, directed at one or more students at a previous school, and did not pursue an investigation.
 - “Rumors” of **Akins’s sexualized behavior toward students** were common.



Accreditation Status Recommendation

- Based on the apparent failures by Ninnekah Public Schools to properly implement the Title IX protections that help guard against the sexual discrimination and harassment of students, the OSDE recommends that the District's accreditation status be amended to **“Accredited With Probation,”** with conditions of probation to include:
 - Development and implementation of a **Corrective Action Plan**
 - Regular **updates to the State Board** on progress and steps taken
 - Appropriate **support of the District's new Title IX team**